



Voice For Greater Minnesota Education

# 2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

MREA advocates on behalf of about 235 school districts, 30 education districts and additional associate members across Greater Minnesota to provide educational opportunities and close achievement gaps in Minnesota in these key ways.

*Draft Platform Recommended by MREA Board of Directors*



## **PUBLIC EDUCATION REVENUE TO SUPPORT EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

Minnesota public schools are struggling to attract and retain the staff needed to meet growing student needs. State aid for public education is not keeping up with inflationary pressures. The current funding model leads school districts to rely heavily on property taxpayer support. This creates major disparities in educational opportunities across the state. MREA is advocating for a significant portion of the state's record budget surplus to be invested in Minnesota's public schools.

### **KEY ACTIONS NEEDED**

#### **ASSIST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING STAFF**

- Increase the basic formula allowance by 5% annually for fiscal years 2024-25.
- Implement a 40% special education cross-subsidy reduction aid program.
- Improve TRA and Health Insurance benefits by reducing employee contributions with targeted state aid.
- Fund targeted staff development and career pathway initiatives.
- Improve funding for student mental health support.
- Create revenue guarantees to ensure small schools and cooperative educational systems can generate meaningful revenue for categorical programs, such as safe schools.

#### **IMPROVE SCHOOL FACILITIES**

There is a significant funding gap between school districts that receive Long Term Facility Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) and the "Alternative Facility" districts. The Ag2School bond credit has been critical for local school facility support, and additional state legislative action is needed to address rural school facility needs, specifically:

- Improve Long Term Facility Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) by allowing more items in the Health & Safety program including boilers, roofs, sidewalks, parking lot improvements and by increasing the LTFMR funding cap.
- Provide equal access to the \$65/pupil intermediate lease levy for rural education cooperatives.

#### **SUPPORT LOCAL CONTROL AND INNOVATION IN SCHOOLS**

- Oppose unfunded state mandates and "one-size-fits-all" approaches to education policy.
- Allow school boards to renew operating levies previously approved through voter referenda.
- Allow school boards to fill a school board vacancy without a general election.